



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Perianesthesia Passion: Defining What We Do

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What is passion? According to Webster, passion is a strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement about something or about doing something.¹ For many of us, the body of work we know as perianesthesia nursing is defined as a passion, the privilege of working in a field of nursing that satisfies the hunger to enjoy the work that we do.

What does renew mean? Again, according to Webster, renew is to begin again with more force or enthusiasm, to make fresh or strong again.² My hope, this year as the principal officer of ASPAN, is to inspire perianesthesia nurses to reflect on their roots in this practice and to restore a vibrant vocation for practice.

Why This Theme?

Choosing this theme for my presidency was intentional. As a past ASPAN regional director, I helped revitalize a component within my region. It was the desire of ASPAN's leadership to keep this component viable, and it was important for its state leaders to do the same. The persistence that one member of that component demonstrated through several years of revitalization was a testament to her strong belief that the component was worth saving. While disheartened at times, she persevered. With the enthusiastic support of ASPAN's leaders and volunteers, a special seminar was sponsored for this component's members. From that seminar, new passion was stirred and new leaders emerged to keep the component going. Why was it important to help one component remain viable? ASPAN is the sum total of its 40 components, which are the sum of ASPAN's members. Without these components and their leaders, we would not have a whole, vibrant ASPAN. Just as the components need ASPAN for leadership, guidance and support, ASPAN needs its components and members to remain the voice and premier organization for perianesthesia nurses.

Healthcare Changes

The changes brought by the Affordable Care Act have wrought different effects in our healthcare settings. In turn, these changes have influenced the nurses who work in these settings. More and more, hospitals are cutting programs and resources in order to survive. In many cases, education funds have been trimmed or eliminated. In spite of the financial impact, most administrators understand that staff must be supported in their quest for lifelong learning and the integration of emerging best practices. It is hard to remain passionate about what we do when we are understaffed or underpaid. And yet, the true passion for one's work reveals itself when a perianesthesia nurse works doubly hard to make sure the patient is getting the best care. Often, the perianesthesia nurse forgets to take a break, skips lunch or stays well beyond the end of a shift to support peers and patients.

At ASPAN's annual Leadership Development Institute (LDI), held in Clayton, Missouri, during the weekend of September 18-20, 2015, we provided space and time for the component leaders to LOVE, LEARN, LIVE. We took time to explore what our specialty organization, ASPAN, has to offer during these times of enormous growth and change in healthcare delivery.

Love

Regardless of your practice setting, whether preadmission, day of surgery/procedure, PACU Phase I, Phase II and/or extended care, you have to love what you are doing. Why practice without passion? The

beauty of this specialty, and nursing in general, is that there is always a niche to find, an area of practice that calls you to be able to do what you love. It is called the “Art of Nursing.”

Learn

How does one begin a journey and fulfill his/her potential as a leader at the state or national level of ASPAN? Get involved! In my presidential speech I quoted Benjamin Franklin who said, “You tell me, I forget. You teach me and I remember. You involve me and I learn.”³ Most of us became involved in ASPAN because of a strong desire to make a difference. ASPAN’s three primary missions make involvement possible and exciting. Interested in clinical practice? ASPAN has opportunities. Interested in research? ASPAN has opportunities. Interested in education? ASPAN has opportunities.

Live

Donald Rumsfeld, the United States Secretary of Defense from 2001 to 2006, delivered an important message during his term. He said “there are no knowns.” There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we do not know we don’t know.”⁵ To this end, as a perianesthesia nurse, I encourage you to seek ways to understand and to impart influence. The mock representative assembly was one of the tools provided to members at the LDI in order to learn and live what we have to do as ASPAN leaders. Active involvement in our profession, and the coveted practice of perianesthesia nursing, allows us to live our practice with influence and consciousness.

Love, Learn, Live

As nurses, and perianesthesia nurses in particular, we are privileged to touch many lives and to have our lives touched in return. Most of us are invested emotionally with the care of our patients. We love what we do! The following is a quote included in our PACU orientation manual at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. Someone asked Dr. R.W. Hickey, “How do you do what you do? You must see horrible things.” This quote resonates with us privileged to care for the pediatric patient. He replied: “We know that children are a rejuvenating wellspring of love and wonder, and caring for them nurtures us as well as them. We know that our work results in more laughter, more discovery, more sleepovers, more birthday parties, more cupcakes, more dances, more graduations and eventually more of us.”⁶ Patient outcomes influenced by our care drive us to continue to live and dedicate ourselves to lifelong learning. The ongoing pursuit of best practices enables perianesthesia nurses to provide the best and safest care to those who have entrusted us with their lives.

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